

# Navy chief replaces mother's memento

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**Roger Croteau**  
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Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter met with the mother of a slain Marine Thursday, and replaced the commemorative coin she was given after her son's death in Iraq, which was later stolen in a burglary.

"It was a beautiful ceremony," said Rose Camero-Gill. "It was very short. He thanked me for my son's sacrifice and gave me a hug. His wife gave me a hug, too. They are very nice people."

Camero-Gill's son, Marine Cpl. Steven Gill, 24, was killed in action in Iraq in July 2005. After his death, then-Secretary of Defense Gordon England presented his mother with the coin.

It was on display at Camero-Gill's vacation home at Canyon Lake. She often made the home available to wounded soldiers and Marines recovering at Brooke Army Medical Center as a weekend getaway.

Then in January, Camero-Gill discovered the home was burglarized. The coin was among the items stolen. An American flag was torn from the wall and a favorite photo of Steven burned.

A neighborhood teenager was later arrested and charged in the burglary, but the coin was not recovered.

Lt. Col. Kyle Campbell, chief information officer for the U.S. Army Dental Command at Fort Sam Houston saw news reports about the burglary and shared the story with people at the Pentagon dental clinic on a trip to Washington, D.C.

"They forwarded the Express-News story to some others and it was in the Secretary of Defense's office in two days," Campbell said.

Winter saw the story and said he wanted to present the coin in person when he came to San Antonio. He gave her a coin like the one presented to her originally, plus a newer version. The ceremony was private, with no press allowed.

"Actually, now I have two coins," Camero-Gill said. "One from the former secretary, which was stolen, and one from the new one."

The coins will be displayed, along with Gill's sword and his final letter home, in a shadow box table built for her by an Army captain, who wanted to help her out after seeing reports of the burglary.

"I'm grateful to all the people who took an interest and cared," she said. "It means more than they could know."

Camero-Gill said she is selling the Canyon Lake vacation home, and it is under contract.

"Now I can move on with my life," she said.

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*rcroteau@express-news.net*